

Paul Aillery

World record holder 6 hours cat. M70



In The Picture

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Paul Aillery already took part in several world championships. He already became French champion this year in the M70 category in the 100 km at the Belvès race, with a time of 10h09m45s. In addition also this year, he became vice-world champion in Berlin within his age category. In 2016, he was world champion within the M65 category and in 2001 he was world champion in the M50 category!

When did you start ultrarunning?

When I was 44 years old I started running and then two years after that I made the switch to ultrarunning.

How come you picked the 6 uur Winter Challenge van Hamme to break the world record within your age category?

After two 100 km races, where I became French champion and vice world champion, I wanted to improve the world record in the 6 hours. Of course, all within my age category. I noticed that at these two 100km races I ran 63.5 and 65.2 km at 6 hours. But of course that is not registered. So I decided to make a first attempt at the 6h in Andorra. But during the race in Italy I fell, after just over 5h of racing. Seven weeks later, I chose Hamme as a candidate. They had several advantages, you don't have to run in tours of 400m or 1km there. The course also had an IAU Bronze Label and Kevin assured me that they met the requirements imposed by the IAU.

When you think back on all your running races, which one do you have the best memories of?

'Diagonale des fous' of 2005 is definitely number one, a race 165 km long with more than 10,000 altimeters! We ran this race in a team of three. Each runner then ran 32 hours and 23 minutes. And we won too, with more than 13 hours ahead of the second team! This has never happened before!

Now that you are world champion in the 6 hours within the M70 age category, are there any other things you wish to achieve? Are you going to attack other world records? Or are you going to run a little more relaxed now?

Well on 2 October, I fell at the 6h in Andorra. I still have pain in my ribs as a result and additionally my hand has also been fixed in two places with metal pins. It was my second 6-hour race where I gained experience, while I have already participated 50 times in a 100 km race. So a 6-hour run requires a different race approach. But with the extra experience, I see opportunities. If I am injury-free next year, I will come to Hamme to attack the world record again and then I want to run up to 63 km. Considering you are also organising this race in May, it seems warmer then, so it seems feasible to me!

Are there any things you would like to pass on to other (younger) ultra runners?

Sports are good for the body and the mind. We also say a healthy mind in a healthy body, or anima sana in corpore sano. And I personally think running is essential for any athlete, regardless of discipline.

Thanks for the interview Paul. And congratulations again on your new world record 6-hour ultrarunning, within the M70 age category.

Kevin Simons